

SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT REPORT

The Independent Bulletin of Science Policy

Vol. VIII, No. 10

P.O. Box 6226A, Washington, D.C. 20015

June 1, 1978

New Washington Favorite: Nutrition Research

A herd instinct often governs Washington science-policy affairs, and currently the herd is stampeding around the subject of nutritional research.

The inevitable outcome will be more money for scientific endeavors in this area; in fact, it has already started to increase, mainly because of efforts by Senator George McGovern (D-SD) to spotlight the government's scattered and inadequate activities in the nutritional sciences. With McGovern having whipped up interest in the subject, initially through his now-defunct Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, and since then through his Agriculture subcommittee on nutrition, others are coming along to work on the issue.

Thus, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) last year convened an inter-agency working group that looked into the nutritional research programs and produced a dour report, "New Directions in

McGovern inquiries, the total has risen, perhaps by \$10 million, mainly because of money earmarked for nutritional research in the budget of the Department of Agriculture).

But, just looking at the money, for the moment, it is doubtful that the true sums are as high as OSTP claims. The biggest part of that \$117 million is credited to the National Institutes of Health, which told McGovern, at hearings last year, that it is performing \$80 million worth of research "relative to nutrition."

McGovern and his staff went over the printout offered in support of this impressive estimate and found such items as "Development of liquid chromatographic units," "research of zoo physiology in Alaska," "specific effects on auditory far fields in animals."

While acknowledging the amorphousness of the subject of nutrition, the Senator expressed himself as a bit puzzled by the inclusion of the aforementioned and many other entries in the computerized inventory. The NIH witnesses said they'd look into the matter.

Addressing himself to the claim of \$80 million in nutritional studies at NIH, McGovern said to NIH Director Donald Fredrickson that if nutrition research

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Guess Who's Returned To Cancer Politics? ---Page 8

Federally Supported Human Nutrition Research." The report has never been published, or even announced, but copies are available, without charge, upon request. (OSTP, Executive Office of the President, Washington, DC 20500).

Meanwhile, the General Accounting Office, in response to a request by McGovern, is fresh off the press with a two-volume report, "Federal Human Nutrition Research Needs a Coordinated Approach to Advance Nutrition Knowledge." (Vols. 1 & 2, \$1 each, but free to university faculty members, students, libraries and non-profit organizations. Request reports PSAD-77-156 and PSAD-77-156A. For free copies: GAO, Distribution Section, Room 4522, 41 G St. NW., Washington, DC 20458. If you're paying for it: GAO, Distribution Section, PO Box 1020, Washington, DC 20013).

Finally, the Office of Technology Assessment is putting the finishing touches on its own examination of the government's nutritional research activities; that should be out very soon.

On the basis of what has been published or revealed at McGovern's hearings, the only possible conclusion is that nutrition is a tattered and poor relation in the big family of government-supported research.

The OSTP study puts government-wide expenditures at \$117 million in Fiscal Year 1977. (Following the

In Brief

Thomas R. Pickering, a career Foreign Service Officer who is US ambassador to Jordan, has been selected to succeed Patsy Mink as director of the State Department's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Pickering, a non-scientist, is highly regarded in the diplomatic service, and his appointment suggests that the Department leadership wants to rejuvenate the Bureau, which has sharply declined in influence in recent years (SGR Vol. VIII, No. 9).

MIT has put together \$2.5 million in foundation funds to establish what's tentatively titled the College of Science, Technology and Society. President Jerome B. Wiesner said the new college — to be located within MIT — will be concerned with "the humanistic aspects of technological society."

Investment Clue: *Business Week* (May 29) reports that "companies with low stock prices and heavy outlays for research and development have been outperforming the broad market by a wide margin."

... McGovern Disputes NIH Spending Claims

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is defined as "having direct implications for dietary prescriptions in man, particularly with respect to preventing illness, and emphasizing clinical nutrition, that figure would have to come down drastically below \$40 million, would it not?"

Fredrickson agreed, and McGovern responded with, "Somewhere in the vicinity of \$20 million would probably be a closer estimate."

To which Fredrickson again agreed.

But whatever the amount of money available at present for nutritional research, it is clear, from studies and various congressional hearings, that the field is in rather poor shape.

The OSTP study, which was requested by the Office of Management and Budget, states that "No mechanism exists to regularly identify, prioritize [*sic* — that abomination is now well-rooted in Washington],

and plan for overall research needs so that total resources can be most effectively and efficiently employed to meet common goals." Informal inter-agency discussions take place through a Committee on Federal Information and Communication in Nutrition, which meets three times a year, OSTP reported. But it added that "Most of the information, however, is exchanged after the fact, instead of in the planning stage, and the effort has had little influence on the setting of priorities."

Cognoscenti of bureaucratic strife will conclude from this curious "after-the-fact" system that some problem exists. OSTP does not provide specifics. But in government nutrition research, there are two big performers — NIH and the Department of Agriculture, and they don't much like each other. NIH is the paragon of big-league pure science sanctioned by the

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"The Science of Nutrition Has... Stagnated"

As part of its study of the nutritional sciences, the General Accounting Office solicited comments from 32 specialists, mainly in academe and various health-related organizations. Following are excerpts from their responses:

Ross H. Hall, professor of biochemistry, McMaster University, Ontario: "The science of nutrition has essentially stagnated since the early 1950s, when the last vitamin to be discovered was announced. To be sure, nutrition science continues to publish results, mostly on the nuances of animal nutrition. What lacks are new ideas, new departures... No awareness of the sophisticated chemical production of food appears on the pages of nutrition texts. The texts discuss protein, fats, carbohydrates, as if chemical processing of food did not exist, or if it does, its effects on nutritional quality is negligible... Nutrition science and food safety are two underdeveloped areas... The decisionmakers of the National Institutes of Health are scientists who do not consider these two sciences interesting and important, and they seem totally unaware of what people eat and the potential effects of eating a fabricated diet."

D. Mark Hegsted, professor of nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health: "...the disease-oriented approach to medical research means that the dominant people in each area set research aims and priorities. Nutrition and nutrition research has not had a priority position in most of these... Probably the only way to bring emphasis to nutri-

tion... will be to earmark funds as has been done for cancer and nutrition."

Quinton R. Rogers, professor of physiological chemistry, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis: "The biggest problem in nutrition research is that it always plays second class to other problems because of the organizational structure. I think there should be a separate Nutrition Institute in the National Institutes of Health — then, if it were adequately funded, nutrition research could be monitored, encouraged, etc. in a positive way."

Arthur E. Schaefer, executive director, Swanson Center for Nutrition, Omaha: "Nutrition has no champion... The bureaucracy has creamed even well-intended legislative mandates and funds for disease prevention..."

Nevin S. Scrimshaw, head, Department of Nutrition and Food Science, MIT: "...physicians currently receive little or no training in nutrition and are often as woefully ignorant or misinformed as laymen... [Most nutritional research] is with experimental animals. This is cheaper, quicker to produce publishable results... but increasingly less relevant to problems of human nutrition, as the same ground is being plowed over and over again with minor variations. Yet... support for this type of nutrition research predominates within NIH and there is no other major funding source, governmental or non-governmental, for work of the type required in human subjects."

... Numerous Gaps Cited in Nutrition Studies

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peer-review system, while agricultural research is buried deep in a heavily politicized department that, until very recently, has shunned peer review. Furthermore, a major function of the Department of Agriculture is to get people to buy what the farmers are producing and the processors are selling, and for that purpose, free-wheeling research on nutrition and health can be a menace. Ask any bacon producer.

The OSTP study provides a damning picture of the state of nutrition research, and, in view of the proud boasts of Washington's science-policy makers concerning their alleged sensitive management of the nation's research resources, it makes you wonder what they were doing for their inflated government salaries. (Present management excluded, since it, at least for a while longer, can claim to be merely the inheritors of a deplorable situation).

Thus, under the heading of "Effects of Nutrition on Human Health and Performance," the OSTP study concludes that "Research gaps in this area are profound. Recommended Daily Allowances have been published for only 16 of the 40 or more known essential nutrients. Many of these allowances are based on limited data and may need to be modified in the future... The biological reactions and metabolic competition that occur within the body — between nutrients, nutrients and drugs, nutrients and food additives, nutrients and environmental contaminants — have not been extensively studied. Yet these interactions are important in accurately determining nutrient requirements" — which invites some wonder as to what in the world we've been getting out of that \$117-million investment in nutritional research; probably work on the order of definitive studies of crunchiness in breakfast foods.

The GAO study, which roughly parallels the report produced by OSTP, comes to the conclusion that "given the present state of nutrition knowledge, it is not possible to say what constitutes an adequate diet."

OSTP comes to the same conclusion, noting, along the way, that "Data are lacking on the amounts and

biological availability of important nutrient forms that occur in various foods. Much of the information currently available is either obsolete because of the introduction of new varieties or processing methods, or incomplete because many of the nutrients which are now considered important were not included in earlier food-composition measurements."

And, says OSTP, "Food sciences research is still in its infancy. Support has lagged well behind the extensive changes in food production, technology, processing, packaging, and advertising that have revolutionized the food industry since World War II. The result is that we understand little about the real effects of these changes on human diets and health."

Written under a charter from OMB, which is ever-alert against ploys to spend more money, the OSTP nutrition report "took the approach of establishing criteria for prioritizing research and of identifying high priority research areas, rather than recommending specific funding levels." In fact, the only reference to new spending is an ambiguous suggestion that "some reallocation of resources may be indicated."

Since there's nothing much around to be reallocated without a bruising fight, the main thrust for getting additional funds will have to come from Congress. McGovern and his nutrition subcommittee plan to return to the subject later this month. High on the agenda are plans to grill the NIH leadership on some of the fine details of what they have put forward as "nutrition research." — DSG

DOT Issues R&D Abstracts

The Department of Transportation has issued a collection of 285 abstracts from research projects that it has supported under its University Research and Training Program. Copies, for \$10.75 each, are available from the National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Rd., Springfield, Va. 22161. Include the order code: PB-278-646.

© Science & Government Report, Inc., 1978

ISSN 0048-9581

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Independently published by *Science & Government Report, Inc.*, twice monthly, except once each in January, July and August. Annual Subscription: Institutions, \$84.50 (two years, \$160); individuals, \$44 (two years, \$75). Editorial offices at 3736 Kanawha St., N.W., Washington, DC 20015. Tel. (202) 244-4135. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC. Please address all subscription correspondence to Box 6226A, Northwest Station, Washington, DC 20015. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. SGR is available on Xerox University Microfilms.

New Report Shows R&D Growth at Standstill

There are a lot of ups and downs recorded in an outpouring of research and development statistics just issued by the National Science Foundation, the nation's official scorekeeper for R&D activities.

But the basic facts are that total government and private spending, though up in dollars — to a projected record high of \$50 billion for 1979 — is virtually stagnant in terms of purchasing power; furthermore, as a percentage of gross national product, R&D remains stuck at 2.2 per cent for the second straight year, compared with 2.3 per cent in 1977 and 3.0 per cent in the peak year, 1964.

What it all comes down to is that the R&D enterprise is big, but it's getting no bigger in its command of resources, and, in fact, is actually shrinking at certain vital points. Whether this matters, beyond the interests of people directly affected by R&D spending, is a separate item. But given the Carter Administration's numerous expressions of concern about the national value of R&D, and its stated intent to boost research activities, the NSF compilations do not suggest that an economic turnabout is in the works.

The NSF report, glowingly titled "National R&D Spending to Exceed \$50 Billion in 1979," (NSF Document No. 78-304, available without charge, from the

Division of Science Resources Studies, NSF, 1800 G St. Nw., Washington, DC 20550) actually paints a rather gloomy portrait.

Noting that the "doubling of the Nation's R&D expenditures since 1969 has been almost entirely attributable to inflation," the report says that, though there has been some "real growth" since 1975, most of it is confined to energy research. The growth, such as it has been, "is not seen as providing a major stimulus to economic growth or productivity in the short term," according to the NSF analysis.

In harmony with many other recent findings about industrial R&D, the NSF study found that industry "has been increasingly emphasizing shorter term pay-offs from its R&D effort. As pointed out in a number of interviews with industrial R&D officials," the report continues, "this has resulted in industry devoting more of its research effort to projects with a specific product or process in mind over projects with no specific application. This trend is expected to continue."

Following specific efforts by the Ford and Carter administrations to reverse the declining financial fortunes of basic research, some improvement was noted in that area over the past several years. But here, too,

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Funds for research and development: 1974-79

(Millions of dollars)

Year	Total	Government	Industry ¹	Universities and colleges	Associated FFRDC's ²	Other nonprofit institutions ¹
By performer						
1974	\$32,677	\$ 4,815	\$22,816	\$3,017	\$ 865	\$1,164
1975	35,128	5,397	24,096	3,405	987	1,243
1976	38,522	5,710	26,618	3,724	1,147	1,323
1977 (est)	42,702	6,465	29,400	4,045	1,375	1,417
1978 (est)	47,000	6,555	32,800	4,570	1,555	1,520
1979 (est)	51,000	7,000	35,900	4,950	1,600	1,550
By source						
1974	\$32,677	\$16,733	\$14,824	\$ 671	—	\$449
1975	35,128	18,127	15,747	743	—	511
1976	38,522	19,478	17,666	815	—	563
1977 (est)	42,702	21,797	19,408	886	—	611
1978 (est)	47,000	23,835	21,475	1,000	—	690
1979 (est)	51,000	25,750	23,400	1,100	—	750

¹ Expenditures for federally funded research and development centers (FFRDC's) administered by both industry and by nonprofit institutions are included in the totals of their respective sectors.

² FFRDC's administered by individual universities and colleges and by university consortia.

Source: National Science Foundation

... Share for Basic Science Down from '60s

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there's actually been little change. The report notes that "Throughout the seventies . . . basic research as a percent of total R&D spending has decreased from 14 per cent in 1970 to 12 per cent in 1977." Since then, as a result of budget increases specifically earmarked for basic research, the amount has gone up, to 13 per cent of total R&D spending, but that's still a notch below the levels of the 1960s.

Growing federal support for basic research, the report suggests, should cause universities to reverse a recent trend toward putting their own money into applied research "Since a large portion of these non-federal funds represent cost-sharing activities on Federal grants. . ." Whether, in fact, our financially shellshocked universities will nimbly follow Washington's R&D zig zags is by no means certain, however, though the NSF analysis says that "the recent Federal emphasis on basic research should result in a reversal of this applied research trend starting in 1978."

The report, which was written before the recent sharp upturn in the rate of inflation, states that "In constant dollars, basic research is expected to increase five per cent in 1978 and three per cent in 1979; applied research should increase three per cent each year; development should grow four per cent and two per cent, respectively." Those growth figures were predicated on an inflation rate that was anticipated at about six per cent when the President submitted the Fiscal Year 1979 budget to Congress last January. Administration officials have since coyly stated that they now figure that inflation this year will run around seven per cent, but few financial specialists take that seriously. Thus, with wages and prices currently running away from the earlier estimates, it is not unlikely that the relatively generous boost that was intended for basic research will actually come close to being washed out before the end of the fiscal year.

With industry increasingly shortening its horizons on research — and actually writing off as research a lot of activities that are more properly regarded as product refinement and redesign — it is also disturbing to note a relative decline in the federal government's share of R&D spending. Unhampered by profit concerns, the federal government has historically been the source of finance for longrange exploratory research. But as the NSF report notes, the federal portion of national R&D spending is now only a bit more than half of the total, compared with 60 per cent in the late 1960s. The then-booming space program accounted for a lot of that bulge, but the effects, presumably, radiated throughout the R&D enterprise.

As for the future: Though "civilian" R&D, parti-

1st Report on US R&D Abroad

There is an increasing amount of controversy over whether inflation and government health and safety regulations are causing US industrial firms to shift some of their research activities abroad.

The data have heretofore been slim, but since 1975, the National Science Foundation has been collecting information on the subject, and just recently issued its first findings (NSF Document No. 78-306, available without charge, from the Division of Science Resources Studies, NSF, 1800 G St. Nw., Washington, DC 20550). Included in a general report on industrial R&D expenditures, the overseas findings were as follows:

"Between 1975 and 1976, research and development performed outside the United States by domestic companies increased 11 per cent from \$1.2 billion to \$1.3 billion. This compares with a 10 per cent rise in total R&D spending by domestic firms in US-based facilities over the same period.

"The drug industry spent \$151 million abroad in 1976, 16 per cent above the 1975 level. It is suspected that industry's reaction to Government regulations account for much of this increase. The drug industry expects to continue to increase foreign research and development at a higher rate than their domestic R&D investment, while other industries will increase their R&D program abroad at about the same rate as their US programs. The prime emphasis of the other industries is toward developing products to meet local markets, and it is unlikely that a sharp increase will occur in this effort."

cularly in energy and health, have been the big gainers in federal spending in recent years, the NSF study states that "Starting in 1980, however, Federal R&D increases are expected to shift back toward defense and space activities."

While there is a confused din about the state of the job market for scientists and engineers, the fact is, according to the report, that R&D employment has risen every year since 1972 — from 519,000 to 566,000 last year; and the projection for the end of the decade is 600,000. The match between talent and jobs is, of course, a separate consideration, but, in any case, virtually all studies report a very low level of unemployment among scientists and engineers.

The question of how much is enough in R&D is yet
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Science Exchanges Embroiled in Rights Issue

Events are rapidly shaping up to make the scientific community the cutting edge of American reprisals for the Soviet Union's mistreatment of dissidents, among whom several scientists have been especially prominent.

No one planned it that way, and, in fact, the leadership of the scientific community has been extremely reluctant to see Soviet-American scholarly relations impaired by extraneous political matters. But mainly because the exchanges are there, to be promoted or withheld, they have been drawn into a situation that has been inflamed by the President's human rights campaign and by the harsh Soviet crackdown on internal dissent.

The threat of reprisals by American scientists has long been lurking offstage, apparently in the hope that the Soviets, who very much value close contacts with American science, would relent in their abuse of dissident scientists. But the matter came to an angry climax within the past two weeks, following the roughhouse trial of Yuri Orlov, a physicist who has long irritated Soviet authorities by monitoring Soviet adherence to the human-rights provisions of the Helsinki agreements. Orlov was sentenced to seven years of imprisonment, to be followed by five years of internal exile.

Shortly after the sentence was announced, a 20-member delegation of American physicists cancelled plans to leave within a few days for a Moscow symposium that had been scheduled under the Brezhnev-Nixon pact of 1972. The symposium was arranged at this end by the National Academy of

Sciences, whose president, Philip Handler, had earlier warned the Soviets that the harshness of their anti-dissidence campaign might jeopardize Soviet-American scientific cooperation.

However, the delegation actually acted on its own, since cancellation by the Academy would require the approval of the 17-member Academy Council. According to William F. Brinkman, of Bell Labs, who is co-chairman of the physics delegation, the cancellation was a spontaneous response to the Orlov episode. Nevertheless, it was clear that Handler was in sympathy with the act, and probably even encouraged it.

On the eve of departure to take part in the dedication of the International Copernicus Center, in Poland, Handler stated, "We have repeatedly informed Soviet authorities that the issue of human rights threatens to erode the willingness of American scientists to cooperate with their Soviet counterparts." He added that "our predictions are being borne out."

Handler also warned that US-USSR scientific relations would be further impaired if two other jailed dissident scientists, Alexander Ginsburg and Anatoly Scharansky, are abused in the Orlov fashion. The Academy president offered no specifics in regard to further retaliation, but scheduled for later this year is another Academy-sponsored physics symposium with the Soviets; in addition, the Academy administers an extensive exchange program under which the US and the USSR exchange scientific visits at levels that add up to 100 months per year on each side.

Whatever the scientific value of these exchanges — the matter is open to debate — the fact is that the Academy, through its large and influential membership, can short-circuit a great many scientific links that are outside of the formal exchange programs.

And, though it didn't seek the role, it appears that the American scientific community is the most likely candidate for carrying out reprisals. The President, despite his human-rights campaign, has so far been reluctant to do anything but lecture the Soviets; agricultural and industrial firms have little interest in Soviet human-rights problems — they just want to make sales.

So, what now remains to be seen is just how much the Soviets do value their scientific ties with the US. The cancellation of the physics delegation finally demonstrates that important elements in the scientific community here are serious about their concern for Soviet scientific colleagues. The warnings of further reprisals are obviously not empty.

The Soviets, however, have clearly demonstrated
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R&D Spending

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to produce any wholly persuasive answer. Clearly, \$50 billion a year buys a lot of research and development. But, as numerous studies have shown, the R&D enterprise has a metabolism that requires growth — in the absence of which it frequently becomes overly cautious and obsessed with risk avoidance. That was one of the main findings in *The State of Academic Science* (Change Magazine Press, 1977; SGR Vol. VII, No. 10), the most extensive recent examination of what's actually happening in academic science and engineering departments.

The Carter and Ford administration budgetmakers accepted these findings and came up with additional funds for basic research. But despite the good intentions, and a bit of an upturn in academic science finance, the effects are being eroded by inflation. And, given industry's widely reported turn toward conservatism in research, the outlook for R&D, while not grim, is not especially bright.

Academy Presidency: A Hardship Post It's Not

SGR is not disposed to investing its limited investigative resources into such peripheral matters as the remuneration and prerequisites of the elder statesmen of American science. Policy is our abiding concern, as a perusal of these columns will reveal.

Nonetheless, the scale of material reward in these

difficult times does now and then command some interest. This being so, we are pleased to note that our colleagues at US News & World Report took up, in their May 1 issue, the subject of "Plush Washington Jobs You Seldom Hear About," and, therein, reported the following:

"On a typical working day, Philip Handler leaves the plush apartment he is furnished for almost no cost, gets into the limousine that is provided free and has his chauffeur drive him to his \$82,500-a-year job.

"Portrait of a captain of industry? No, Handler is president of the National Academy of Sciences and one of a little-known type of Washington official who leads a comfortable life in a twilight zone midway between government and private enterprise.

"Not part of any federal branch, these officials head what are usually known as quasi-government agencies — a special class, both public and private. While in many cases they are self-supporting and do not rely on tax dollars, these agencies either were created by Congress or depend on federal subsidies or contracts for their existence.

"Some quasi-government officials earn more than the \$75,000 yearly paid the nation's No. 2 executive, Vice President Walter Mondale. Their prerequisites

often rival those of chiefs of large business firms.

"For instance, in addition to his salary, Handler is provided with a household staff of two to maintain the \$100,000-plus Watergate suite with a view of the Potomac — all supplied by the academy for a nominal fee.

"Spokesmen for the academy, which gets no federal subsidies but which exists largely on government contracts for advising on science and technological matters, justify Handler's fringe benefits and pay on the ground that they are comparable to those of presidents of medium-size universities."

Handler, who was chairman of the department of biochemistry at Duke University School of Medicine prior to 1969, when he became president of the Academy, ranked at about mid-point in the *US News* salary report — above the \$66,000 for cabinet secretaries, but far below the \$140,000 listed for the president of the Federal National Mortgage Association.

NSF Honors Two Retiring Congressional Friends

Two retiring Congressmen who have been especially nice to the National Science Foundation have been given NSF's Distinguished Public Service Award, making them the third and fourth from Capitol Hill to be so honored in recent years.

The awards, "for distinguished public service related to science and technology," were bestowed last month on Rep. George H. Mahon (D-Tex.), the longtime chairman of the House Appropriations Committee,

from whence comes NSF's money, and Rep. Olin D. Teague (D-Texas), chairman of the Science and Technology Committee, which writes the laws that govern the Foundation.

A couple of years ago, the awards were given to Rep. James Symington (D-Mo.), who gave up the chairmanship of the Science and Technology subcommittee on NSF for an unsuccessful run for the Senate, and Rep. Charles Mosher, of Ohio, who retired as ranking Republican on the S&T committee, only later to reappear unexpectedly as staff director. In any case, it does appear that a bit of a pattern is developing as NSF proceeds with the task of developing good Congressional relations.

What the political novices in the Foundation leadership should realize, however, is that there's more to be gained from massaging a Congressman's ego long before retirement than just on the brink of it.

Along with Mahon and Teague, NSF also honored Walter Sullivan, science editor of the *New York Times*, who is dean of American science writers.

Soviets

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that they don't give a damn about outside opinion concerning the manner in which they treat their politically uppity citizens. And, it does not seem likely, given the treatment accorded Orlov, that they will back down from their stated intentions to bring Ginsburg and Scharansky to trial.

If they do, it is a near certainty that large and influential segments of American science will respond by cutting off relations with their Soviet counterparts.

She's Back at Drum Beating for Cancer Money

One of the biggest guns in cancer politics holds neither elective nor appointive office, does not work from behind any throne, disposes of no patronage, and does not command respect as a scientific sage.

Who can that be?

Why, it's syndicated psycho-counselor Ann Landers, whose 1971 column in behalf of the then-pending "War on Cancer" bill produced an avalanche of mail that is legendary on Capitol Hill. Senator Cranston, of California, reported 60,000 letters in five weeks; Senator Percy said his deluge was unprecedented.

Looking back on that bizarre episode, it's now plain that its major effect was to help stampede the Congress toward passage of a bill that is now widely regarded as ill-conceived. (The drum beating for passage included unanimously passed House and Senate resolutions calling for cancer to be cured "by 1976 as an appropriate commemoration of the two hundredth anniversary of the independence of our country...").

Well, times have changed and nonsense like that is too transparent even for the US Congress. But Ms. Landers hasn't lost her interest in cancer lobbying. She's been at it again, this time as part of a last-minute effort by the cancer lobby to pump still greater funds into the National Cancer Institute.

Directing her readers' attention to the NCI budget — for which the Administration is seeking only a ground-losing \$6 million increase — Ms. Landers, in a recent column, urged them to bombard members of the appropriations committees with pleas for a vastly greater increase. (The column, incidentally, has approximately the same opener as her 1971 classic: "For those of you who look to my column for laughs, sorry, I have nothing for you today.")

Ms. Landers specifically identifies the relevant member of Congress in the regions where her column

appears, and urges readers to "Write to your Congressman, or clip this column and write across it, 'Vote for more money to conquer cancer' and sign your name."

The odds are that it won't work this time, though, as might be expected, Ms. Landers still has the power to send her readers hurrying to the mailbox. For example, she targeted Senator William Proxmire in a column that was carried as an advertisement May 7 in the *Milwaukee Journal*; within two weeks, he had received over 1200 letters.

Nevertheless, the presentday reality of cancer politics is that the Congress and the Administration are disillusioned with the so-called war approach, and have accepted the arguments against singling out any one disease for favored budgetary treatment. Thus, the Administration, mindful of the fact that Congress usually adds a bit to the President's budget for health research, started out with a request for \$858 million for NCI — virtually the same as last year's figure. The House appropriations subcommittee raised this to \$889 million; the Senate appropriations subcommittee, which, at this writing, is about to act, will probably go a little higher than that. But, when the final returns are in, the budget for NCI will register an increase considerably short of 10 per cent, which is generally what's been happening with most of the Administration's research budgets.

Any attempt to boost the amount when the bills come up for floor passage will encounter serious difficulty. In contrast to the early days of the cancer program, Congress today operates under strict budget guidelines. It's tough, nearly impossible, to modify the verdicts of the appropriations committees — even with Ann Landers on your side.

Science & Government Report
Northwest Station
Box 6226A
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Second class postage paid
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